



Parent's Fact Sheet

Including flexible working

If you have children, are thinking about starting a family, or you are interested in flexible working, this fact sheet is for you. If you have any comments please contact the Department's HR team (hr@ndcn.ox.ac.uk).



Case Study

My DPhil definitely feels like a game of two halves as our son arrived almost exactly halfway through.

Taking time out of my training in intensive care medicine, I had previously been able to focus 100% on my studies, often working late and at weekends. Like most first-time parents, I think I underestimated how much my life would change but since becoming a father, I've really come to appreciate the flexibility that my academic training allows.

Although my wife has gone part-time and taken on the lion's share of childcare duties,

being able to fit my academic work around being a dad has allowed me to maximise the time I can spend with my son as he grows up. I also feel I can support my wife as much as possible, without compromising the quality of my research output.

It is always going to be difficult to combine being a dad, husband, academic and clinician but I have been massively reassured by all the help and advice I've received from both colleagues and my Department.

Matt

Family leave

The University policies on family leave (including maternity, paternity and adoption) and parental emergency leave can be found on the University Personnel Services website: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/personnel/.

The information given there applies to all University staff. It details what an employee has to do before the birth, during leave and after leave. This is a very detailed website; if you have any questions please contact the Departmental HR team (hr@ndcn.ox.ac.uk).

Fathers, as well as mothers, are entitled to family leave, and the Department encourages them to consider this, as part of our commitment to achieve a healthy balance between work and family life.

Thinking about your leave

Extending your fellowship or grant

If you are a researcher on a grant or holding a fellowship, you may need to contact your funder to request an extension to your funding term.

Many grant-awarding bodies allow for this, and you can get advice from the Research Team in the Department (research@ndcn.ox.ac.uk).

Keeping in touch (KIT) days

Feeling 'out of touch' on returning to work after maternity leave is a common problem. KIT days are a way of enabling women to spend the odd day at work if they want to, while they are on maternity leave.

You are allowed a maximum of ten KIT days during maternity leave. You are entitled to be paid for the work that you do on these days if you are receiving only statutory maternity pay, or in the period of nil pay. You will not get paid in addition for those days if you are on full pay maternity leave.

Someone to talk to

There are many things that people want

Student Parents

The Health and Welfare section of the Student Gateway (www.ox.ac.uk/students/welfare/childcare) and the Oxford University Student Union website (<http://ousu.org/advice/life-welfare/student-parents/>) offer more information for student parents. It is also recommended that you contact your Senior Tutor at College.

to think about when taking family leave. Questions such as how to supervise a research group while you are on leave, or how long you should think about being on leave for, may be best answered by someone who has been in a similar position to you in the past.

The HR Team has a list of people who are happy to share their experiences with you. This includes people who have moved to Oxford with school-aged children, adoptive parents and those who have arranged flexible working.

To be put in touch with someone, please contact the HR Team (hr@ndcn.ox.ac.uk).

Flexible working

The University supports a number of flexible and home working initiatives. Flexible working arrangements are principally informal, to avoid unnecessary bureaucracy. You should discuss these with your manager or supervisor.

If you want to find out what arrangements others have considered, or wish to discuss your specific circumstances, please contact the HR Team (hr@ndcn.ox.ac.uk).

Formal arrangements

If you need to make more formal arrangements, you have a right to request flexible working (part-time, working from home) provided you have worked for 26 weeks continuously and have not made another application during the past 12 months.



“I really appreciate being able to pick my kids up from school a couple of days a week and work flexibly to accommodate this.”

The requests to work part-time need to be made as soon as possible to allow the employer time to consider any possible issues arising. Your employer is not obliged to concede to your request but is obliged to present an argument to support their decision.

A grey area for people on short-term contracts is the extent to which you lose time on your contract if you work part-time. This is very inconsistent across funding bodies and is something you should check if you are thinking about requesting part-time hours.

Intranet & ParentsNet

The best place to find up-to-date information is on the NDCN Intranet: https://sharepoint.nexus.ox.ac.uk/NDCN_Intranet. In the HR section you will find links to current University policy and the NDCN Staff Discussion Board: <https://sharepoint.nexus.ox.ac.uk/DiscussionBoard>

ParentsNet is a forum for parents in the Medical Sciences Division to exchange ideas and goods. It is hosted on WebLearn and is subscription-based. For further information, or to sign up, email admin-pa@dpag.ox.ac.uk

Returning to research

There are special issues surrounding career breaks for scientists. It is not possible simply to arrange for someone to ‘cover’ the work, and staff can quickly lose touch with rapidly changing fields. However, career breaks can also be an opportunity to pause for thought and move your research in new directions.

The Daphne Jackson Trust is dedicated to returning talented scientists to careers after a break of two years or more. The Returning Carers’ Fund is a small grants scheme intended to support the return to research of women and men who have taken a break of at least six months for caring responsibilities: www.admin.ox.ac.uk/eop/thevice-chancellorsdiversityfund/returningcarersfund/. Many other funders offer similar schemes. See the HR section of the NDCN Intranet.

Childcare

Nurseries

The University has four nurseries in Oxford and has subsidised places at several nurseries in and around Oxford. The waiting list for University nurseries is very long. Everyone advises getting on the waiting list as soon as possible. This can be as early as you or your partner know you are expecting a child. All

Outreach

Being a parent can mean that you have more opportunities (and more motivation) to get involved with outreach activities at schools and nurseries.

Our Department has an excellent track record of taking expertise to classrooms in schools around Oxford and even taking children out of classrooms to enthuse them about some of the work that we do.

Email communications@ndcn.ox.ac.uk if you would like to get involved.

applications are kept confidential; you can apply for a nursery place before you tell the Department.

There are also a number of other nurseries close to the hospital that NDCN staff have used. There is an informal NDCN Staff Discussion Board on the NDCN Intranet where staff have posted their experiences. The Oxfordshire Family Information Service has a wealth of information about different types of childcare available: www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/oxfordshire-family-information-service-oxonfis

We suggest that you have an alternative plan just in case you don't get a University nursery place when you want to return to work.

Paying for childcare

Childcare can be expensive; the University offers two schemes which help parents save tax and national insurance on these costs:

1. Salary Sacrifice Scheme – for University Nurseries
2. Childcare Voucher Scheme – for nursery fees, holiday play schemes, child minders, nannies, and even supermarkets and swimming. Children must be aged under 16.

Schools and holidays

Applying for a place

For information about applying for a place at a local school see the Oxfordshire Family Information Service. Information about standards at your local school can be found on the OFSTED website. This website provides reports about nurseries as well.

If you are interested in private schools you must contact them individually. There can be long waiting lists. A number of them have nurseries for children aged around three years.

Bringing children into work

When an emergency occurs it sometimes feels necessary to bring children into work. However, most of our working environments have significant hazards to children. If it is unavoidable to bring a child in, then it is necessary to inform the Head of Department, or the Head of the Unit in which you work.

School holidays

The school holidays are long, and no matter how much annual leave you have, it is unlikely that you will be able to cover them. There are a number of kids holiday clubs around Oxford that operate during the holidays and half terms. The NDCN Staff Discussion Board contains some suggestions.

